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UNCLAS PARIS 000455

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PLEASE PASS G/TIP FOR AMY ROFMAN AND JENNIFER DONNELLY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KCRM PHUM KWMN SMIG KFRD ASEC PREF USAID FR

SUBJECT: NOMINATION OF ANTI-TIP HERO JEAN CLAUDE MBVOUMIN

REF: 08 PARIS 358

¶11. (U) Post nominates Jean Claude Mbvoumin as a 2008 anti-TIP hero. Mr. Mbvoumin founded and runs the Soccer Culture Solidarity Association (Associate Culture Foot Solidaire (CFS)), which seeks to raise awareness and combat trafficking in young soccer players from Africa. As a former soccer player recruited from Cameroon to play in France, Mr. Mbvoumin was moved to take action to combat this problem, which affects thousands of 12-18 year olds every year. Children throughout Africa are lured to Europe by corrupt recruiters that treat children as merchandise and fail to abide by immigration and labor laws. Once in Europe, recruiters often pay children a small percentage of what was originally promised and abandon the children after they fail to make the cut for a soccer club or injure themselves during training.

¶12. (U) Mr. Mbvoumin educates European leaders and potential recruits about the realities facing many child players that are recruited to Europe with promises of success and riches. CFS hosted an International Conference on Young Soccer players in 2006 and 2007 to warn potential victims of the realities of soccer recruiting. Mr. Mbvoumin has testified in 2007 before the European Parliament to raise awareness of the issue and find solutions to the problem. CFS has also worked with the Federation of International Soccer Associations (FIFA) to change recruiting laws to better protect minors. With the help of the International Organization for Migration, CFS created a welcome booklet to be given to newly arrived soccer players. The booklet explains labor laws and highlights social services that can help the young players. Mr. Mbvoumin is a leader in fighting trafficking in soccer players; we commend his efforts, which have increased international awareness of the issue.

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